

NAME: Osaki, Tomi DATE OF BIRTH: 11/5/1890 PLACE OF BIRTH: Wakayama  
Age: 85 Sex: F Marital Status: M Education: University

## PRE-WAR:

Date of arrival in U.S.: 1920 Age: 30 M.S.: M Port of entry: San Fran.  
Occupation/s: 1. Kitchen helper 2. Teacher 3. Housewife  
Place of residence: 1. San Francisco, Ca. 2. \_\_\_\_\_ 3. \_\_\_\_\_  
Religious affiliation: None  
Community organizations/activities: \_\_\_\_\_

## EVACUATION:

Name of assembly center: \_\_\_\_\_  
Name of relocation center: \_\_\_\_\_  
Dispensation of property: \_\_\_\_\_ Names of bank/s: \_\_\_\_\_  
Jobs held in camp: 1. Teacher 2. \_\_\_\_\_  
Jobs held outside of camp: \_\_\_\_\_  
Left camp to go to: Holland

## POST-WAR:

Date returned to West Coast: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address/es: 1. Holland 2. San Francisco, California  
3. \_\_\_\_\_  
Religious affiliation: Christian Church  
Activities: 1. \_\_\_\_\_ 2. \_\_\_\_\_ 3. \_\_\_\_\_  
If deceased, date, place and age at time of death: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of interviewer: Kaz Morisawa Date: 7/23/74 Place: San Francisco, Ca.  
*Translator: Kaz Morisawa*



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Name: Tomi Osaki

Age: 85 years old

Birthdate: 25th year of Meiji

Birthplace: Wakayama Ken

What year and age when came to the US; 30 years old/ 1920

Major Occupation: House Wife, Teacher, ...  
her husband: Farmer

Relocation Camp:

Interviewer: Kaz Morisawa

Interview Date: July, 23, 1974

Place of Interview: San Francisco, California

Translator: Kazuyoshi Morisawa

Typist:



NAME: MRS. TOMI OSAKI

AGE: 85

BIRTHDATE: 25th year of Meiji

BIRTHPLACE: Kudayama, Yakayama pref.

WHAT YEAR AND AGE WHEN CAME TO THE U.S.:

1920, age 30

MAJOR OCCUPATION: Wife: Teacher, and housewife.

Husband: Farm owner.

RELOCATION CAMP: *Honolulu*

*Trans. by Kazuyoshi Monstera*  
*June 6 '75*

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Q: Your name, please ?

A: Mrs. Tomi Osaki.

Q: Where are you from ?

A: Kudayama, Yakayama pref.

Q: When were you born ?

A: I was born on November 5th, in the 25th year of Meiji  
(1890)

Q: How old are you ?

A: I'm eighty-five.

Q: Do you remember any events or things that happened during  
that time in Japan ?

A: I remember the war between Russia and Japan, but I can  
not remember the Sino-Japanese war. The only thing I do  
remember from that event is that I went to welcome with a  
little Japanese flag the soldiers returning back to Japa  
after conquering Rojum. I was living in Japan, and teach-  
ing at Mise public high school when World War broke out.  
I had heard about the war in Mancharia, but never knew  
much about it (it never impressed me at all).

Q: What were the things that you enjoyed most while you were  
in Japan ?

A: Well, I enjoyed a lot of things in Japan, but the best  
of all was that my mother led me learn whatever I wanted,  
because I was the only child. I also enjoyed playing the  
violin on the bank of Kinokawa (river) under the beautiful  
moonlight. The tone of the violin echoed all around,



harmonizing with the murmur of the stream of the river. The most unforgettable thing was when I went with my mother on a picnic and we brought origiris and pickles with bamboo skin, and picked up some Yomogi and wadatsumi.. I cannot remember anything sad or awful, because I didn't got any serious illness in Japan.

Q: What's your educational background ?

A: I went to the Jinjo (high) elementary school and then I entered the Kyoritsu University for women.

Q: In which classes were you interested most ?

A: I was very interested in the Philosophy class of which Prof. Nakajima was in charge. I also respected Mrs. Ayako Takahashi.

Q: Why do you respect her ?

A: Although she was eighty, she was in good health. I respected her because I had been taught many good things by her.

Q: Could you give us any examples ?

A: For example, I learned about thriftiness from her, She never wasted even a piece of paper. She cut a piece of paper into two and cleaned her comb with this other half and scrabed the handrail of the sliding door with it, and burnt it for bath. Another example was that while others went to a summer house on hot days she usually got up at four in the morning, watered the plants in the garden, washed the faded clothes, and put them away for the next year and so on . She did all of this



before the sun rose and got hotter. These experiences gave me valuable ideas when I brought up my children, even though I felt it was pretty hard for me to keep on doing those things myself.

Q: Who did you respect most among the teachers you had been taught ?

A: Professor Hachiro Kitayama (he was a noble man) and Professor Tokio Aoki.

Q: Tell me, How the students look like in your school ?

A: The students wore Kimono and shoes at that time. We could get into school with our shoes on.

Q: Which were your favorite books at that time ?

A: "Holotogisu" and "Konjikiyasha". They were so interesting that I could stay up all night reading them.

Q: Are there any episodes you can remember during your school days ?

A: At my mother's suggestion I went to see every teacher to show my faith and gratitude after the graduation ceremony. This impressed the principal of the school, who suggested that I should become a teacher. I started teaching in the Tono Elementary school system in April of that year. My starting salary was six yen a month (at that time). Besides my teaching there I prepared to take an examination for a junior high school teacher. I purchased the books from Tokyo for that examination.



I taught there for one year, because I was really anxious about becoming the junior high school teacher by all means. I transferred to the school in Kuroyama where I taught there for three years and studied more for the examination. A few days before I took the examination I wanted to see my luck by pulling a lot, because I would be embarrassed if I failed the examination. It showed me a good luck such as -" a dragon ascending to the heaven ".

Q: What does it mean ?

A: This means that one will marry in one's middle age, a big change would happen during middle age, and that one could see exalted personages in advanced age. I didn't believe it after all. However, I married at twenty-eight and became a Christian during middle age, and was invited to the Gosankai and Togugosho by the Japanese princess and was also given a decoration. When I told others about the lot I pulled, they didn't believe it. They said that that must be a coincidence. But I believed that there were many mysteries in the world. I remember that the emperor passed away at this time, and I went to Nijubashi to send off his funeral carriage as a representative of the school. General Nogi and his wife followed the emperor to the other world a little after the emperor's death.

Q: What did you do after you had passed the exam for the junior high school teacher?

A: After mastering the credential courses, I taught at the



Tsu- Jo gokko in Mie prefecture. I was also a proctor there.

Q: How were the students there ?

A: Most girls came from rich families, and they were excellent students, including both of Takahashi and Kawashima sisters who are living in San Francisco now. Sister Kawashima, who is Mrs. Koda's younger sister, was nominated to the fifth-order of Merit.

Q: When did you come to America ?

A: It was in 1920.

Q: Was it after or before your marriage ?

A: After my marriage.

Q: How did you get married ?

A: My marriage was a sort of arrangement between my father's and husband's friends because they were the ones who arranged the meeting between Mr. Osaki (now my husband) and I.

Q: What made you come to America ?

A: One day when I was teaching at the Tsu high school I received a letter in which my friend mentioned Mr. Osaki. They said that Mr. Osaki was here from America to look for a bride. They also said that Mr. Osaki came from a good family which was descended from a family (Kamei-Han) of high position in the Federal period. When Mr. Osaki went to America he was only nineteen years old, and stayed over there for seventeen



years. He was a honest man and hard worker. He also owned a pear farm in America. My friend then asked me to come to Osaka and meet Mr. Osaki there. I asked my mother to let me go and meet Mr. Osaki. She agreed to let me meet Mr. Osaki in Osaka but not to let me go with him to America.

Q: What did you do then ?

A: I went to meet him in Osaka. I talked to him about my mother's decision. He said that he had to go back because he had to meet his obligations of his farm. But he would come back to Japan in three to five years.

Q: Did you decide to marry him at that time ?

A: No.

Q: When did you make up your mind ?

A: Then we met each other several times in Osaka. I could not feel this at the beginning, but I found that he was very gentle and I felt that he loved me very much by the way he talked. After three weeks I made up my mind to marry him.

Q: When did you marry ?

A: We married at my father's friend's house on October 21. The marriage ceremony was almost the same as today's ceremony. I remember that a little boy and a girl in red and white Kimono poured omiki (Japanese sake) in the cups.



Q: Did you come here right after your marriage ?

A: No. I stayed in Japan for seven months after I had married.  
Then We came over here.

Q: How did you come to San Francisco ?

A: When I came to San Francisco with my husband, we took the late ship by way of Seattle. We paid thirty dollars to the captain for our passage.

Q: How was the situation on the way to San Francisco ?

A: The ship was crowded. Most of the passengers were from Kagoshima and were coming to marry. At this time many marriages were arranged by exchanging their pictures. Consequently, many girls married without much knowledge of their husbands. There was always danger for girls to decide to marry this way, because some boys lied about their pictures or professions. I know that some girls jumped over the board on the way.

Q: What happened when you arrived at San Francisco?

A: A month later We arrived here I became pregnant, and gave birth to my first son.

Q: How many children do you have ?

A: I have three children, two boys and a girl.

Q: What else happened?

A: When we went to Tahoe. We received a telegram that my mo-



ther was in critical condition. I got ready to go back to Japan right away. However, I had to wait for three days until the ship came in.

Q: How was your mother's condition when you got to her ?

A: I arrived in Japan on September 3rd, but I could not get to her before she died, and her funeral had been prepared, I cried all night beside mother's body.

Q: Did you come back to San Francisco right after the funeral?

A: No, After everything was settled I wanted to take my children to see my husband's younger brother in Fukuoka. We went to Hamada, Osaka, Kyoto, Nara, Nikko and Mt. Fuji.

Q: How old were your children at that time?

A: My oldest son was nine, the younger was six, and my daughter was four.

Q: How did you make your living here ?

A: My job had been completely changed from teaching. I worked at my husband's farm as a kitchen helper for a while. It was very hard and laborious work. When I cooked even simple foods such as kimpira, because I had to cook a lot.

Q: How many hours did you work ?

A: I worked all day long from three o'clock in the morning, taking care of three children, washing and ironing etc. etc. I sometimes wanted to go back to Japan because the



life was so hard here, but I put up with it as the family should be together all the time. My husband, Osaki, quit his farm when the economic depression struck every country in the world in 1929 to 30.

Q: Did you mean that you were out of jobs ?

A: Yes, But just at that time because I started teaching at ~~a~~ Japanese school which had been started in Holand. I decided to go there to teach Japanese. I thought that I could teach in my way there as a new school usually wasn't so restrict at the beginning. I taught Monday through Friday for thirteen years. I saw some of my students I taught there at the testimonial dinner which was held recently.

Q: What was your impression of Americans?

A: Mrs. Moray was the first American I met in my school days. She was a missionary and was very kind to us.

Q: Did you do anything with Americans here ?

A: When I came here I tried to teach flower arrangement to some Americans, but I had a hard time making myself understood to them because of my language problem. It took me a long time to overcome this difficulty.

Q: How have people here treated you as a Japanese ?



A: In the school in Holand, we, Japanese and Chinese, couldn't sit together with Americans in the classes. So, I changed schools, because that wasn't match with my doctrine. Then the war broke out, and I received the order that we had to leave home, to the concentration camps. An inspector from the F.B.I. came to school and looked at everything written in Japanese. For this reason I lost all the letters I had received from my mother.

Q: Please tell me how you spend your time in the camp?

A: During my stay in the camp, I gave lectures at the "Seicho no Ie" every night as I believed in the group. I was very pleased to teach whatever others wanted, even though the children didn't like it. I had about three-hundred people in my class and taught them how to make dry flowers, etiquette in everyday life, Mizuhiki manufacturing etc.

Q: How about your children ?

A: Our eldest son, Wayne, was majoring in business at the University of California and also studied construction through correspondence school. Our younger son and daughter were in high school and my daughter got acquainted with a man in the camp, who is now her husband.

Q: When did you leave the concentration camp ?

A: In December, we left the camp for Holand.



Q: Did you stay there for long ?

A: No. We moved again to San Francisco so that Wayne could keep on studying there.

Q: Did you experience any discrimination against you ?

A: At first agitation to expell the Japanese was severe everywhere. However, our honesty and diligence were recognized by people here gradually. Still, many Japanese could not live in their own houses because these houses were already occupied by black people even though they belong to the Japanese.

Q: After you settled down. How did you make your living ?

A: After Minister Shigeru Yoshida's authorization by signing a document I opened the Kinmon Gakuen with thirty two pupils. I devoted myself to education here with a small salary about \$50.00 to \$70.00 a month. (Of course, money was not important for me). I believed that what I taught others would remain with them for ever.

Q: What did your husband do ?

A: My husband did gardening jobs and Wayne helped him whenever he had time out of school.

Q: How is your situation now?

A: My son has his own business and employs several Americans.

Q: What do you think about your son's success?

A: We believe that this success is due to other's warmth and generous help.

Q: What is your religion ?

A: I am a Christian.



Q: What is your religion ?

A: I am a Christian.

Q: Is Christianity your family's religion ?

A: No, My family's religion was Shingon-Shu.

Q: Could you give me any reasons why made you decide to become a Christian ?

A: I hesitated to become a Christian at first, because of my family's religion. However, I really wanted to become a Christian because of my son, Wayne. He was a Christian. I was much impressed by his attitude, because he always kept his words. He always said to me that we should not judge things by someone else's story. We could not even say if movies were good or bad unless we had seen them with our own eyes. I took up my desire to become a Christian with my husband. He agreed with me and gave me permission to become a Christian if I really believed in it. Then I was baptized by Dr. Kawamoda on a Christmas day. Everybody was delighted. Especially Wayne, my son, who cried and gave me a kiss on my cheek when he heard the news.

Q: When you were in Japan, What were the people's impressions of Christianity, of Christians, and of Christ ?

A: Most of the people in my town kept away from it. Even my husband had a bad impression of Christ, because Christ



looked pitiful on the cross to him.

Q: What do you think about Christians or Christianity today?

A: I myself have been a very faithful Christian for more than ten years. But, I haven't been to the church since I injured my legs. I always pray and read the Bible at home. When I do go to church I sometimes cannot understand what the priest says in his sermon even if it is given in Japanese. I wish I could have a good sermon one day.

Q: I'm looking forward to going to the church when this manuscript is completed.

Q: What do you feel about education?

A: I have a strong feeling about education, therefore I dedicate my whole life to it. Even though I am retired I am still interested in writing a book about my fifty years experience in teaching now.